Is Jesus our Shepherd?
The Leadership of Jesus.

Mar. 29 1938.

IS JESUS STILL OUR GOOD SHEPHERD?

Ps.23: The Lord is my shephord: He leadeth me.

INTRO. Near the floodwaters of the San Joaquin River we saw hundreds of pigs rooting for something to eat where the fodder was scarce and the mud deep. It goes without saying that under such circumstances the pigs were lean. Nearbym in a more favorable place where the grass was plentiful, sttod a big fat sow giving suckle to her litter of fat-bellied babies.

The thot came to me that here was a picture of humanity doday. We are all rooting for a living where for most part the fodder is poor and the mud is deep. True, some have plenty in a rich pasturage, but so many, a vast majority, have to root in pastures of scarcity and want, where the mud of adversity and despair is deep.

We also saw cattle penned in corals where they had to stand up to their knees in mud, while just outside there wereacres and acres of rich-growing grass and plenty of ground without mud to stand on. Why the owners were so inconsiderate of their ~~ppp~~ animals is more than I can understand. But here is another picture of humanity. The masses of mankind kept penned up under a leadership of control that has little regard for personal welfare, except their own in the pursuit of economic advantage and political p we power.

In still another field a flock of sheep all facing the same way and following a leader- yet another picture of the masses of mankind.

In rooting for a living this generation has uprooted about everything in existance. What the thinkers are doing in the realm of investigation and criticism, discovery and philosophy, the thotless are doing in the realm of social practice and conduct. Sacredness and security have largely been eliminated from our working vocabularies.

After the World War we started to work for a peace that would do away with future wars; but alas, already the tide has turned. Nations are struggling for lost prestege and power, each striving to get his share of the unequally distributed raw materials and natural resources of the world- the lion's share at that! We are again saying that wars are inevitabe and we are again preparing for war on a larger scale than ever.

And in the desperateness of the world situation , people are caring little about theories and forms of gov't and less about world movements and their possible consequences. They are blindly following their leaders. The German people follow their Hitler, the Italians their Muzzolini, the Russians their Stalin and the Japanese their military leaders. Here in America there is very little intelligent understanding of the New Deal, but the people of the U.S. believe in their leader, Franklin D. Roosevelt and follow him. The world is playing the age-old game of "Follow the Leader".

I. THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS.

1. In the days of His flesh Jesus faced a world very similar to ours. Political corruption backed by military power, econimic conditions uncertain and unjust; a social order dominated by special privelege and supported by the ~~ø~~-~~ø~~~~ø~~~~ø~~~~ø~~ labor of the enslaved masses. Even as today, religion then was indifferent to the misery, injustice and inequalities of life; and even as today there was, on the part of the masses a growing indifference to religion.

2. Jesus saw these conditions in the world of His day but said and did very little directly in regard to them. Not that He was indifferent, for the records show clearly that the very heart and soul of Him became identified with the sins and miseries of mankind thru a degree of suffering ea concern unequalled by any other man that has ever lived.

But Jesus knew the futility of attacking the evils in the world directly. He saw that men did not know how to live, that until their lives were based upon a sure foundation of spiritual reality all effort to alleviate and save them would be in vain.

3. By the way He Himself lived He demonstrated to the world how we should live. We can explain His way on only one basis- He centered His life in God. Not in the God of Jewish conception only, but in the God of nature, in the God of universal reality, in God as God really is.

The Kingdom which was the theme of his preaching and teaching was the rule of God in the hearts of men. The greatness of Christ is not to be found in His achievements or His teachings so much as in the way He lived His life in God.

Jesus gave to the world its great Magna Charts of freedom, commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. All thru that setting forth of the principles of right living there runs a very simple message which is- knowing God and living like God

This was His own vital concern. When but a lad of 12, He told His parents, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Andonce when his disciples urged him to eat the food they had brot him, he said, "I have meat to eat you know not of: my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." And at the last as he hung on the cross he exclaimed in triumph, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." The very center and core of his whole life is God. God-centered living in the place of self-centered living is the ultimate solution of all our world problems and the salvation of mankind from all our evils and sufferings and miseries.

II. Many times have I been asked, "What difference does it make whether or not I believe in God?"

1. There is a prevailing belief that some people are ~~n~~ naturally religious and others are not. Some adore operas while others are bored to death by them. Some prefer classic symphonic music while others get their musical thrill from jazz. Some people are inspired by the reading of the gems in literature while others would rather sit down and read the Sunday funnies or a cheap novel. Some people are scientifically inclined while others are not. And so after the same manner many think that religion is a matter of taste- you either like it or you dont like it, so what's the difference.

2. Whereas it is true that many treat their religion like that, making it a matter of taste and convenience, nevertheless, it does make a vast difference whether one truly believes in God or not. God-conscious living has everything to do with the way we live and think and and act. It makes all the difference in the world ~~whether~~ whether we are God-centered or self-centered.

The person who believes in God and who lives in God regards the world as his Father's house. He knows that holiness, justice, virtue and love to be the dominating forces in the world and in personal character. That person who lives in the conviction that there is a God has a protecting power which no temptationcan undermine and no coertion can disqualify. When a man trusts God he can be trusted with his follow men to do the square thing in every situation. When a man loves God he ~~he~~ just cant help loving his fellow men.

Tell me, which leader should we follow for the welface, peace and security of the world-Hitler? Muzzolin Stalin~~A~~ or Jesus Christ?

III. Christ's Way of dealing with the World.

1. Some people try to solve the problems of the world by withdrawing from the world as much as they can. but the world's problems cannot be solved by running away from them. Sooner or later the world comes right back and slaps them in the face.

Others seek security by giving into the world. They give way to all manner of indulgencies to the tune of "Eat, drink and be merry". Alas, their contentment is only for the moment. All you have to do is to visit our assylums and hospitals and prisons to see how ~~their~~ their search for contentment has ended in tragic ruin. In lonely attic rooms, on beds of pain and thru prison bars, only too often we hear the heart-breaking confessions of those who yielded to the world.

Still others play the middle as against both ends. They adopt the conventional course. They see to it that they are as good as those around them. They mix their religion with the customary spices of life. Not too good but not too bad either. They dont gamble heavily but only a little. They seek popularity in their own class and click and dont worry about the rest of the world. They swing with the majority as over against the less popular minority. Now let me tell you a plain truth that you can read from the pages of history. This class of people do not contribute to the world its benefactors and saviors. ~~This class of~~ people do not give ballast to life when the world is being rocked in periods of storm and ~~stress~~ stress.

Security is not to be gained by either withdrawing from the world or by giving into it or by sliding along with it. The world must be conquered. And that is just what Jesus did-he conquered the world by centering his life in God. That is what the apostles did and that is what all true followers of Christ have done ever since.

The unusual rainstorms of this winter, leaving in their wake destruction of life and property and countless thousands homeless, remind us of the international, economic and social upheavals in all parts of the world. Democracy has been inundated and largely washed away. We have lost faith, to a great extent, in ourselves and in one another. When we analyze the situation we make the tragic discovery that we have lost faith in God. All that is wrong in us and with

the world today is our loss of faith in God. Who are they that are fed up and sick of the whole business of living? Not they whose faces are turned heavenward and whose hearts beat with faith in God. Think of Paul in prison, having been persecuted and hounded by his enemies and now chained in a dungeon cell to be led to his execution at any moment, and yet saying, "Nothing shall separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus!" "It is no longer I that liveth but Christ liveth in me."

The heavy rains may make our rivers muddy menacing torrents, hurricanes may whip the surface of the ocean into heaving seas, but deep down in the ocean all is calm and serene. Those whose lives are hid with Christ in God know that *He will not suffer their foot to be moved." They are not afraid of life because they know "Underneath are the everlasting arms". They rest securely in Him who able to keep."

IV. But so many ask, "How can I know God?".

1. Dr. Sizoo was once asked that question. In turn he asked the inquirer a question, "You must have somewhere an intimate friend. How did you get to know him?"

"The best friend I have in the world I came to know first thru his books. I was drawn to him thru his writings. Then some mutual friends told me about him and I liked him more than ever. But we really became friends when I invited him to my house and we spent an evening together exchanging experiences and confidences. That night we became inseparable, life-long friends."

Anyone can get to know God the same way. Jesus did. His mother and father no doubt told him about God. The O.T. scriptures drew him to God. All nature revealed to him handiwork of his Heavenly Father. Many of his earnest religious friends drew him still closer to God. Then there came the great awakening of his life when he realized that he and God were one, that he belonged to God.

The Bible will introduce you to God, and the more you read it the more clearly you will understand Him. Then you may have some friends who are also friends of God and they can tell you some more about Him. But best of all you will get to know God in the meditative quietness of your own mind and heart. Oh, what a discovery is that- to know God in your own heart and soul! Read His book, walk and talk with His friends, and live in the presence of His love! Then you shall know what it means to have an unfaltering faith in an unfailing God

"Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts,
Thou fount of life, thou light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn unfilled to Thee again."